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DISCUSS PROGRESS, DEFICIENCIES IN EDUCATION

Because of the consistent efforts of the Communist Party and the government, considerable progress has been made during the past few years in the field of public education. The number of preschool educational institutions has increased fourfold and the number of children attending the schools has increased sixfold. About 661 new primary schools have been established, and the number of intermediate and trade schools has doubled. Numerous schools for national minorities and evening schools for workers have also been set up throughout the country. The social background of the students has shifted in favor of the working class. The number of teachers has grown 2 m 26,000 to 41,760, 711 new schools have been constructed since 9 September 1944, and 131 are under construction. The living conditions of teachers have also been improved, and teaching has undergone a fundamental change and is now based on Marxist-Lenimist theories. Soviet experience is being implemented consistently, and a single general school of the Soviet type has been introduced throughout the country.

In spite of these achievements, the pace of educational progress still lags behind the general progress of the country. Study plans and programs are not introduced at the proper time, and textbooks are very poor. Many of the latter contain numerous ideological and political errors, are printed on low-quality paper, and display hideout illustrations, whereas their size is unduly large to increase sales profits. The okoliya and local people's soviets demonstrate complete indifference to educational problems. The number of schools is still inadequate, and each year 20,000 children are deprived of educational facilities, which explains the large number of illiterates. About 735 school buildings are unfit for use and others are kept in very poor condition. Student discipline has improved, but is still far from satisfactory. During the 1949-50 school year, only 61.8 percent of students attended classes in intermediate schools, 29.2 percent took make-up examinations, and 8.89 percent had to take repeater courses. Furthermore, 31 percent of the students in primary schools, 51 percent in preparatory schools, and 50 percent in high schools have unsatisfactory grades.

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On the other hand, there is a widespread movement among the teachers to leave their profession, whereas others still cling to old bourgeois teaching methods and conduct classes on a formal, bookish basis. Pedagogical work is almost unknown, and instances of corporal punishment are still frequent.

The main reason for these failures is inadequate implementation of the directives of the Bulgarian Communist Party on educational matters. The Ministry of Education has also given poor leadership to teachers and educational organizations, neglected to implement Soviet pedagogical methods, and failed to set up correct and coordinated plans. On the other hand, educational matters receive little attention from political organizations, and the Dimitrov Youth Association is inclined to overburden the students with political and campaign duties. Teachers are not properly pursuing their ideological and political training.

The forthcoming national conference on education, called on the initiative of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, is expected to bring about far-reaching changes in all phases of public education. -- Demir Yanev, Vice-Minister of Public Education

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